



# International Journal of Sanskrit Research

अनन्ता

ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2024; 10(4): 303-305

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Received: 27-05-2024

Accepted: 04-07-2024

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## विससर्ज ततो गङ्गां हरो बिन्दुसरः प्रति

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### Abstract

The Valmiki Ramayana, along with other ancient texts and numerous sculptures, employs a variety of celestial symbols and references to depict the event of the Ganga's descent from the heavens to Earth. Certain descriptions bear a striking similarity to celestial phenomena such as comets. In this regard, we aim to elucidate the shloka concerning the disintegration of the Ganga in outer space: "विससर्ज ततो गङ्गां हरो बिन्दुसरः प्रति". This shloka closely parallels contemporary celestial observations regarding the disintegration of comets along their orbital trajectories.

**Keyword:** Valmiki Ramayana, orbital trajectories, numerous sculptures, employs, ancient texts

### Introduction

Ancient civilizations meticulously observed the night sky, documenting their findings through legends and narratives that permeated various cultures. These accounts often utilized different constellations as reference points, weaving intricate storylines intertwined with diverse religious beliefs. In numerous civilizations, such as the Greek, Egyptian, and Indian, constellations like Orion and Pleiades (Kṛttikā) hold significant importance, with many legends associated with them. Beyond literary records, these celestial narratives are also depicted in stone carvings and monuments at sites of religious significance, capturing intricate details. One notable legend is the descent of the Ganga, which is extensively referenced in ancient literature and is illustrated at various historical sites. Most of these accounts incorporate celestial references and describe events that can be correlated with the characteristics and behaviors of celestial objects, such as comets. Patil *et al.* [1] elaborate on these correlations in their work, "Legend Descent of Ganga and Similarities with Impact Event." In this paper, we aim to emphasize a specific shloka that details the appearance of the Ganga during its disintegration in outer space, which closely resembles modern observations of comet Shoemaker-Levy 9. These correlations warrant further exploration to reassess our ancient knowledge from a different perspective, rather than dismissing it under the label of "mythology".

### Discussion

According to the Valmiki Ramayana, Ganga is described as the daughter of Himavan, symbolizing snow, who resides in the celestial realm. When she was summoned to descend to Earth, concerns arose regarding the potential impact of her rapid descent on the planet. Consequently, Lord Shiva consented to contain Ganga within his matted hair. For many years, Ganga remained ensnared in Shiva's locks, unable to escape, and continued to orbit in the cosmos. At the request of Bhagirath, Shiva gradually released Ganga, drop by drop, from his hair. This significant event is depicted in stone at the Kailashnath Temple in Kanchipuram, featuring various celestial motifs. In the sculpture (image 1), Ganga is represented as a celestial entity with a tail resembling that of a comet. The idol of Shiva is portrayed in an unconventional manner, symbolizing the constellation Orion, which corresponds to the celestial representations of Nataraja or Dakshinamurti Shiva. Additionally, the dog depicted in the sculpture signifies Canis Minor, a common symbol associated with Orion in ancient cultures.

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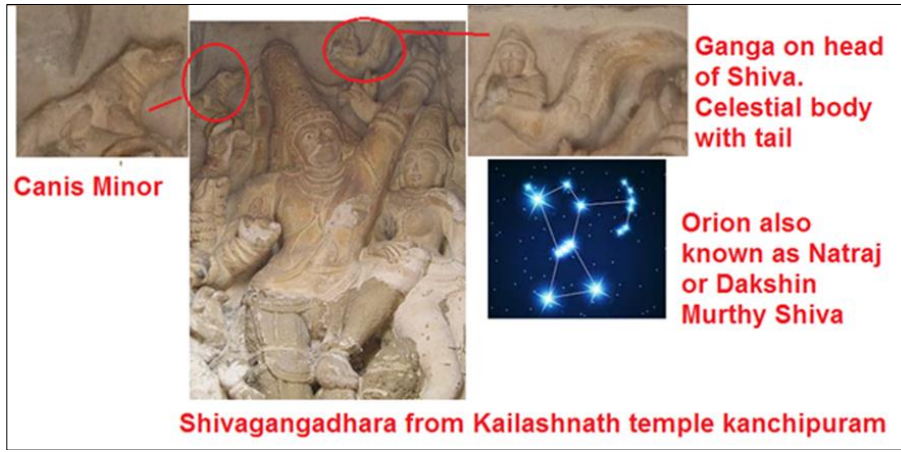


Fig 1: Kailasnath temple carvings

This event is described in Valmiki Ramayana in the form of shloka that talks about its disintegration.

“अनेन तोषितश्चाभूदत्यर्थं रघुनन्दन॥ 1.43.10॥  
विससर्ज ततो गङ्गां हरो बिन्दुसरः प्रति।”

1) बिन्दु = Dot or Pearl 2) सर := Lake ? or String? 3) प्रति = word used for comparison  
(Source: Valmiki Ramayan, English translation reference from Dr.Geervani's work.)

The shloka draws a parallel between the disintegration of the Ganga and Bindusara, as indicated by the phrase “बिन्दुसरः प्रति” (“bindusara prati”). Many translations interpret this as “lake bindu,” given that “sara” translates to lake in Sanskrit. While this interpretation appears fitting due to the narrative's focus on water, it is important to note that “sara” (सर) can also signify string, often used to refer to necklaces in Sanskrit. This term remains prevalent in various local languages, where it denotes gold and pearl necklaces. Consequently, the description of disintegration in terms of dots or pearls suggests that this shloka may be likening these drops or dots

to a necklace or string of bindu (pearls). This interpretation is particularly relevant if ancient civilizations were describing a celestial phenomenon, such as a comet, undergoing disintegration during its passage. Therefore, the term bindusara should be understood as a string of pearls or a string of dots. Contemporary observations support the notion that celestial bodies frequently disintegrate within the terrestrial planet zone under the influence of the Sun and tidal forces. Instances such as comet 73/P Schwassmann-Wachmann and Shoemaker Levy-9 illustrate that such occurrence are indeed commonplace.

## 2) Modern Comparison

The Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 (SL-9) event of 1994 marks the inaugural direct observation of a disintegrated comet colliding with Jupiter. This occurrence garnered significant attention and was meticulously documented by both the scientific community and amateur astronomers worldwide. Despite the use of contemporary equipment aimed at collecting various data points, an intriguing term was employed to characterize the fragments of SL-9 during the description of this event: “string of pearls” (image2).

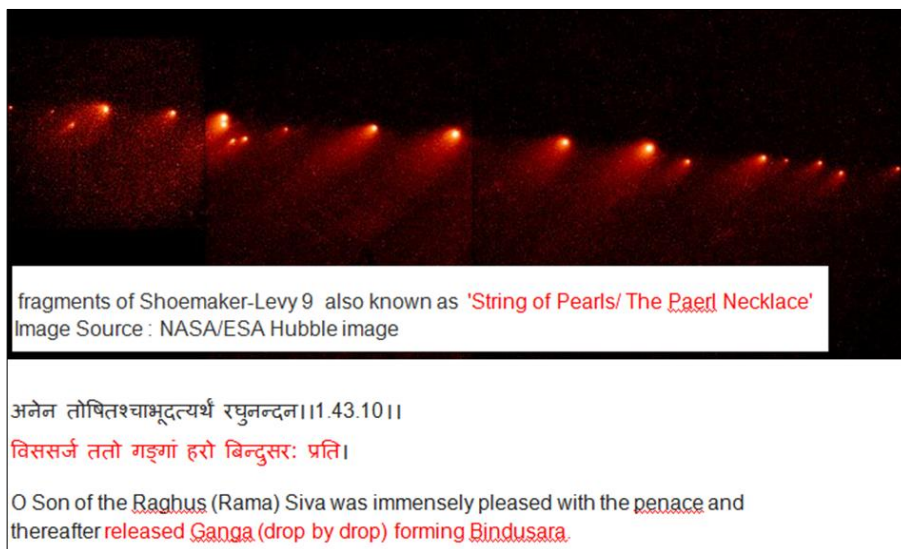


Fig 2: 1994 Comet SL-9 disintegrated fragments known as string of Pearls.

Contemporary scientists have employed artistic language to articulate these extraordinary events. Interestingly, ancient civilizations also utilized the metaphor of a “String of Pearls”

to depict the seven fragments of the Ganga. Similar to the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet, which ultimately collided with Jupiter, the legend of the Ganga recounts the tale of these

seven fragments striking the Earth at high speeds, resulting in various phenomena that can be likened to the trajectory of celestial objects within the Earth's atmosphere.

### Conclusion

The shloka “*visasarja tatō gaṅgāṅ harō bindusara: prati*” seems to draw a parallel between the celestial phenomenon of a comet's disintegration and the imagery of a string of pearls (*bindusara:*) located near the constellation Orion. The terminology employed by ancient observers and writers bears a striking resemblance to contemporary descriptions of the fragmented remnants of Shoemaker Levy-9, which is also referred to as a "string of pearls." This suggests that, despite significant technological advancements over the millennia, our emotional expressions remain deeply rooted in our human heritage. Therefore, it is essential to approach our literature and ancient wisdom with a renewed perspective and an open mind.

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